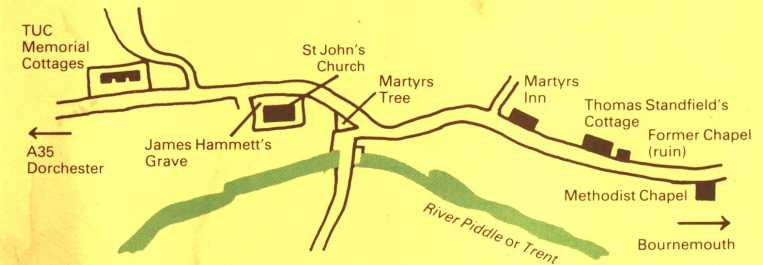


THE MARTYRS OF TOLPUDDLE

• A guide to the museum in the
T.U.C. MEMORIAL COTTAGES
Tolpuddle, Dorset •



In 1834, six agricultural labourers from Tolpuddle were sentenced to seven years transportation for administering illegal oaths while founding a trade union. After vigorous protests from the rest of the trade union Movement, the men were pardoned and allowed to return to England. In 1934, the TUC built six cottages in Tolpuddle in memory of the Martyrs – George Loveless, James Loveless, Thomas Standfield, John Standfield, James Brine and James Hammett; and in July 1981, a new historical display was mounted in the museum. Other historical sites in the village are marked on the map above.

EXHIBITS

- 1 Hay harvest, drawn by Duncan. *Mansell Collection.*
- 2 "Skeleton at the plough". *Museum of English Rural Life, Reading.*
- 3 Rick burning, Kent 1830. *BBC Hulton.*
- 4 A "Swing" letter, c. 1830. *Public Record Office.*
- 5 Machine wreckers: detail from MacLean's "State of the country", 1831. *Mansell Collection.*
- 6 Robert Owen, 1771–1858.
- 7 Membership certificate of the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union, 1834. *National Museum of Labour History.*
- 8 "The gathering of the unions on New Hall Hill", Birmingham, May 1832.
- 9 Meeting of agricultural labourers, Wootton Bassett, c. 1830. *Mansell Collection.*
- 10 Mr Baron Williams. *National Portrait Gallery.*
- 11 Old Crown Court, Dorchester.
- 12 James Frampton.
- 13 Crown Court records, Dorchester 1834.
- 14 Plan for the Wesleyan preachers in the Weymouth circuit, 1829–30.
- 15 "The Song of Freedom".
- 16 Notice on bridge over River Frome, near Moreton, Dorset.
- 17 A calendar of the prisoners for the Lent Assizes, Dorchester 1834.
- 18 "York" prison hulk, Portsmouth.
- 19 Hobart Town chain gang.
- 20 Ruins of the former penal colony, Port Arthur, Tasmania. *Australian Information Service.*
- 21 Home of George Loveless, Glenayr, Tasmania. *Eastern Daily Press.*
- 22 Sydney barracks.
- 23 Letter from George Loveless to his brother James, September 10, 1834.
- 24 Norfolk Island penal colony, 1847. *Mansell Collection.*
- 25 Lord Melbourne. *National Portrait Gallery.*
- 26 Thomas Wakley, MP.
- 27 Lord John Russell. *National Portrait Gallery.*
- 28 Daniel O'Connell. *National Portrait Gallery.*
- 29 Demonstration against the transportation of the Martyrs, Copenhagen Fields, London, April 21, 1834.
- 30 Route of the procession from Copenhagen Fields.
- 31 "The Pioneer or Grand National Consolidated Trades' Union Magazine", April 26, 1834. *John Burns Library, TUC.*
- 32 Free pardon granted to George Loveless, March 10, 1836.
- 33 Poster for a public dinner to celebrate the remission of the sentence on the Martyrs. *British Museum.*
- 34 Title page from "The Victims of Whiggery", by George Loveless, 1837. *Marx Memorial Library.*
- 35 Subscriptions received for the Dorchester Labourers' Farm Tribute from May to August 1838.
- 36 Portraits of five of the Martyrs from "Cleave's Penny Gazette of Variety", May 12, 1838.
- 37 New House Farm, Greensted, Essex. *Marx Memorial Library.*
- 38 Barn, New House Farm. *Marx Memorial Library.*
- 39 "Morning Post", December 17, 1839. *Marx Memorial Library.*
- 40 "The Chartist Circular", September 28, 1839. *John Burns Library, TUC.*
- 41 "Chartist song", by Thomas Cooper, 1805–1892. *John Burns Library, TUC.*
- 42 Title page from "Chartism; a New Organisation of the People", by William Lovett and John Collins, 1841. *John Burns Library, TUC.*

St. John's Church Tolpuddle

and a brief history of

The Tolpuddle Martyrs

ST. JOHN'S CHURCH, TOLPUDDLE

In the time of Edward the Confessor, the Manor belonged to the Benedictine Monastery of Abbotsbury. During the reign of Henry I, the revenues of that house were annexed by Bishop Roger of Sarum to enable him to carry out extensive building schemes.

About this time a Romanesque Church was erected here, remains of which are seen in the doorways North and South of the Nave, and possibly in the lower storey of the Tower. The latter ends with a corbel-table which probably carried a low pyramidal spire. The coffin lid of the priest Philip belonged to this Norman Church.

Most of the present building apparently dates from the end of the 13th Century. The plain splayed faces of the arches mark the transition from the Early English to the Decorated style.

The Chancel has been twice rebuilt from the level of the window cills. The existing walls, roof and windows, erected in 1855, probably represent the general aspect of the original building. The small door on the South side is ancient.

The Nave and South Porch, with their interesting roofs, no doubt formed part of the old Church. The South Transept was built in 1855 but its internal arch is old.

Part of the North Aisle has been rebuilt, and other stonework of the windows renewed.

The upper storey of the Tower and its buttresses appear to be of the latter part of the 14th Century, and the West window is an example of Late Perpendicular work.

Of the four Bells in the Tower, the first, third and fourth are ancient. The second bell is dated 1655.

THE TOLPUDDLE MARTYRS

In 1834 six agricultural labourers from Tolpuddle were sentenced to transportation for seven years.

Their names were:

George Loveless
James Loveless (George's brother)
James Hammett
Thomas Standfield
John Standfield (Thomas' son)
James Brine

Five were Methodists, the Loveless brothers being local preachers. James Hammett's grave, marked by a headstone carved by Eric Gill, and erected by the Trades Union Congress in 1934, can be seen in the North West corner of the Churchyard. James Hammett was the only one of the six men to settle in Tolpuddle on his return from transportation.

In 1830, the labourer's wage was nine shillings a week. In succeeding years it was reduced to eight shillings, then seven. In 1834 the farm labourers were threatened with a further reduction to six shillings a week.

Under the leadership of George Loveless, these men considered together how they might defend themselves against progressive reductions of their wages. They tried to come to terms with their employers, using the Vicar of Tolpuddle as an intermediary. Promises were made but not kept.

The men then turned for advice to the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union. Two delegates of the Union came to Tolpuddle, and, as a result, the Friendly Society of Agricultural Labourers was formed by the men.

At this eruption of Trades Unionism in the village, the employers and the local magistrates took fright. One of the local magistrates, James Frampton, sought guidance from the Home Secretary, Lord Melbourne. The upshot was that George Loveless and five of his fellow labourers were arrested on 24th February, 1834, imprisoned in Dorchester, and at Dorchester Assizes in March 1834, were sentenced to seven years' transportation.

In 1934 the Trades Union Congress built six cottages and a hall in Tolpuddle in memory of the six Tolpuddle trade unionists, each cottage bearing the name of one of the six men. These are situated at the West end of the village on the A35 to Dorchester.

In the centre of the village is a seat erected in 1934 by Sir Ernest Debenham. It stands under a great tree, traditionally known as the Martyrs' Tree because the men are said to have gathered under it for some of their meetings.

Standfield's cottage can be seen next to the Wayside Garage going East towards Bere Regis.

At the East end of the village, on the right, is the Methodist Chapel, with its memorial arch.

Further details can be found in a booklet available in the hall of the Memorial Cottages, and many interesting exhibits are on show.

- 43 Chartist meeting, Kennington Common, April 10, 1848. *HM The Queen*.
- 44 "Agricultural shows and prizes": cartoon from "The Agricultural Lock-out of 1874", by Frederick Clifford, 1875. *John Burns Library, TUC*.
- 45 London, Ontario 1849.
- 46 Methodist church, Siloam, London, Ontario.
- 47 Home of George Loveless, near Fanshawe, London, Ontario.
- 48 John Standfield's store, Bryanston, London, Ontario.
- 49 Home of James Brine, Clinton, Ontario.
- 50 James Brine and Elizabeth Standfield. *Marx Memorial Library*.
- 51 George Loveless, 1797-1874.
- 52 Grave of George and Elizabeth Loveless, Siloam, London, Ontario.
- 53 "The agricultural labourers' union movement, 1872: pictures of English rural life, past and present". *Museum of English Rural Life, Reading*.
- 54 "The agricultural labourers' union movement, 1872: pictures of English rural life, the hope of the future". *Museum of English Rural Life, Reading*.
- 55 Labourers' meeting at the Eleanor Cross, Geddington, Northamptonshire 1872. *Mansell Collection*.
- 56 Joseph Arch, 1826-1919, President, National Agricultural Labourers' Union.
- 57 Shepherd. *Mansell Collection*.
- 58 Eviction of agricultural labourer and family, c. 1900. *National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers*.
- 59 Joseph Arch addressing the sixth annual demonstration of agricultural labourers, Ham Hill, Yeovil, Whit-Monday 1877.
- 60 Poster for a meeting of the Agricultural Section of the Workers' Union, June 16, 1914. *Museum of English Rural Life, Reading*.
- 61 "The poor's best friends are the poor": cartoon from "The Labourer", February, 1915.
- 62 George Edwards addressing a strike meeting at Fakenham, Norfolk, April 1923. *National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers*.
- 63 "The Labourer", March 28, 1914.
- 64 Workers' Union tent, Three Counties Show, Hereford c. 1920.
- 65 Eviction of farm worker and family. *National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers*.
- 66 Eviction of farm worker and family.
- 67 NUAAW contingent, demonstration against the Industrial Relations Bill, London 1971. *National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers*.
- 68 "What you sowed, we are reaping": cartoon by Vicky from "News Chronicle", November 19, 1941.
- 69 Lobby of Agricultural Wages Board, London 1974: centre, Joan Maynard, MP. *National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers*.
- 70 Annual commemorative rally, Tolpuddle 1979: l. to r. John Hose (NUAAW), Jack Boddy (NUAAW), Lionel Murray (TUC General Secretary) and Jack Lucas (TGWU).
- 71 & 72 NUAAW posters and publicity. *National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers*.
- 73 Blandford Agricultural Society Certificate of Merit presented to George Ballett, 1854.
- 74 Caution notice posted in Tolpuddle on February 22, 1834.
- 75 Drawings of agricultural workers' conditions and of convict ships in the 19th century.
- 76 Maps showing the arrest and transportation of the Tolpuddle men and their movements in Australia and Canada, drawn by JF Horrabin, 1934.
- 77 "Who was then the gentleman?": cartoon by Will Dyson, 1934.
- 78 "Curiosities of history": cartoon by Low, 1934.
- 79 Unveiling of commemorative plaque at Siloam Cemetery, London, Ontario 1959.
- 80 Various drawings of events and places connected with the Martyrs.
- 81 Drawings of Tolpuddle and of James Frampton's home at Moreton.
- 82 Centenary commemorations in Tolpuddle 1934.
- 83 TUC Memorial Cottages.